

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 08TBILISI1343, GEORGIA: SOUTH OSSETIA--SITREP 3: RUSSIAN BOMBS

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08TBILISI1343**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08TBILISI1343</a>	<a href="#">2008-08-09 07:56</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tbilisi</a>

Appears in these articles:

[http://rusrep.ru/article/2010/11/29/wikileaks\\_docs\\_02/](http://rusrep.ru/article/2010/11/29/wikileaks_docs_02/)

VZCZCXRO7065  
PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHSI #1343/01 2220756  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 090756Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9867  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 001343  
  
SIPDIS  
  
DEPT FOR EUR/CARC  
  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [RU](#) [GG](#)  
SUBJECT: GEORGIA: SOUTH OSSETIA--SITREP 3: RUSSIAN BOMBS  
FALL THROUGHOUT GEORGIA  
  
REF: TBILISI 1341

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Begin Summary and Comment: Multiple bases, airports, and Georgia's port of Poti were all bombed overnight by Russian aircraft, with bombing continuing in the

daylight hours of August 9, with bombs hitting civilian targets in the Georgian city of Gori. Reports of casualties continue to come in, most still unreliable and unverifiable, but it is clear that casualty numbers are growing. There were reportedly dozens killed in Senaki and Poti. The government of Georgia has not declared a state of emergency, but is limiting news being aired on TV and has evacuated some key government buildings in Tbilisi. The bombing is causing widespread fear in the Georgian population. In South Ossetia, OSCE confirms that artillery fire continued into the morning hours near Tskhinvali. The MFA has released no new statements, and the Ministry of Reintegration has said the Abkhaz de-facto authorities have asked UNOMIG to immediately withdraw from Kodori. This sitrep covers events that have transpired overnight on August 8-9 in Georgia (reftel). End Summary and comment.

¶2. (C) President Saakashvili told the Ambassador in a late morning phone call that the Russians are out to take over Georgia and install a new regime. They will not stop at retaking South Ossetia, but will move on Tbilisi. He fears the Russians will never agree to a ceasefire. Saakashvili and the Georgian leadership now believe that this entire Russian military operation is all part of a grand design by Putin to take Georgia and change the regime. Saakashvili said that the Russian forces are now attacking Tskhinvali and the Georgian forces are resisting. We believe the Georgians are out of air defense supplies, which makes them vulnerable to Russian air attacks. He also believes the Russians will soon attack and try to seize the upper Kodori valley. Ominously, the Abkhaz formally asked UNOMIG this morning to withdraw their detachment in the Upper Kodori.

¶3. (C) OSCE observers report that beginning at 0600 on August 9 Georgian artillery began shelling Tskhinvali and becoming heavy after 0900 to the Southwest of the city. The JPFK commander reported that ten of his Russian peacekeepers were dead, and others were wounded. OSCE observers said that Georgian aircraft were bombing the city at 1100 on August 8. According to OSCE, there has been no visible presence of Georgian forces in the city since 1500 on August 8 when they withdrew. No accurate numbers of casualties are available and no international organizations such as Red Cross are present to assist with casualties.

¶4. (C) Poloff called the MFA and was told that there are no new statements since August 8, but confirmed that the Government has not/not called a state of emergency. The MFA website: [www.mfa.gov.ge](http://www.mfa.gov.ge) appears to have been hacked.

¶5. (C) Deputy Minister of Reintegration Ruslan Abashidze told Poloff that the situation in South Ossetia is the same as August 8, with shelling coming from Java, but he believes Georgian forces control the nearby villages. He said that Georgian forces are in control of Tskhinvali and are inside the city. Turning to the Abkhaz conflict he reported that the Abkhaz side has asked UNOMIG to withdraw immediately from Kodori (note: we have been unable to confirm request this with UNOMIG but such a move indicated intended hostilities).

¶6. (C) UNOMIG observers reported that all was quiet in the Zugdidi on the evening of August 8, aside from Abkhaz moving 9 T-55 (1960,s Soviet era) tanks toward the cease-fire line.

¶7. (C) Confirmed overnight (August 8-9) bombings include:

-- Vaziani, again. This former Soviet military base, which is usually home to 4th Brigade is being used as a mobilization site for reservists. It lies only a few kilometers east of Tbilisi. Buildings were reportedly hit this time.

-- Senaki military base in west Georgia. This base is home to the 2nd Brigade. Unconfirmed reports indicate 20 killed there.

-- The Port of Poti. Georgia's deepest port outside of Ochamchire in Abkhazia. Several "flat racks" where ships are

loaded and unloaded were bombed, as was the nearby Coast Guard station. Press reports indicate at least 15 people were killed.

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-- Kopinari Airport near Kutaisi. This joint civilian and military airport was also bombed. It is home to Su-25 fighters and AN-2 Colt resupply aircraft.

-- Marneuli Airbase, approximately 40 km south of Tbilisi, was bombed for the third time.

-- The city of Gori. Apparently, one attempt by Russian jets to bomb an artillery position near Gori missed. A bomb landed in town destroying some stores and abandoned buildings. No casualties were reported in this attack. Georgian radio later reported that Russian bombers attacked Gori early August 9, attempting to knock out the last bridge linking the road crossing Georgia from east to west as well as a communications tower. President Saakashvili reported that at mid-day August 9, Russian planes had begun bombing housing blocks in Gori, with hundreds of casualties, calling this "pure terror."

-- Upper Kodori was also bombed. Details are sketchy.

18. (C) Additional unconfirmed reports include:

-- Sections of the railroad running from Poti toward Kutaisi may have been bombed.

-- Dozens of police in Mestia (north west Georgia) have mobilized and are moving toward the Russian border.

-- The Zugdidi road is open, and Georgian troops are moving north toward Kodori.

19. (C) On the economic front, the Government has been undertaking contingency planning in case of a prolonged conflict. During an August 8 meeting with the Ambassador, Prime Minister Gurgenedze talked about his efforts to calm investors during the current crisis. He noted that the economy had been remarkably calm. There had been no change in the currency and the stock exchange was working normally. Georgia had not touched its Eurobond money, and natural gas and electricity supplies were in good shape. The PM noted that the Georgians were considering contingencies, especially with regard to energy supplies, should the conflict continue. For example, one major power plant had already shifted over to natural gas from electricity and there are plans to import gas from Turkey. The Georgians are also planning to stop exports of electricity to Russia and have made arrangements to purchase "off-peak" energy from Azerbaijan. Although investors were nervous, the PM noted that there was no panic buying among the population.

TEFFT